A REASON FOR HOPE

THE ALS ASSOCIATION

FALL 2007

HELPING: IT'S A DOG'S LIFE

WHAT MATTERS MOST

Advocates Light the Way to Treatments and a Cure

ALS Association
Fighting Lou Gehrig's Disease

FALL07

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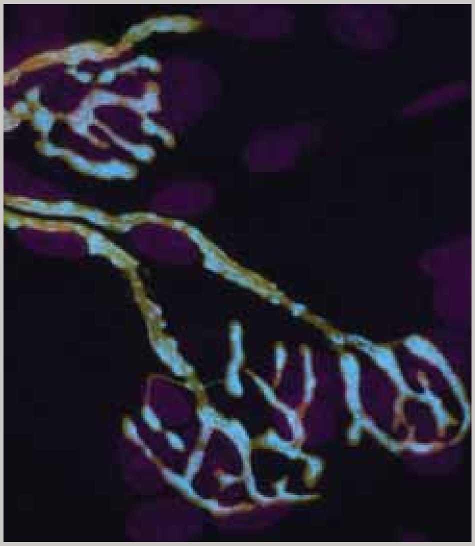

THE ALS ASSOCIATION
FALL 2007

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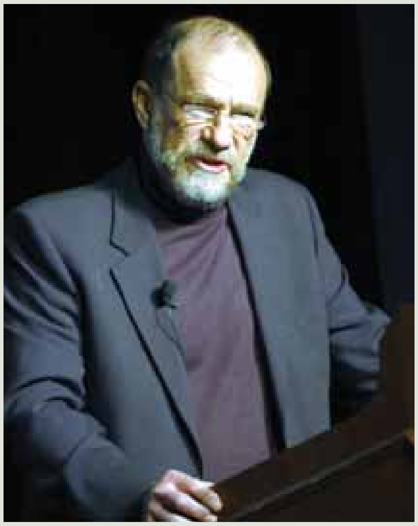
By Noah benShea

What Matters Most and Day to Day Heroism



Noah benShea

Noah benShea is the International best-selling author of 20 books translated into 18 languages and the National Laureate for The ALS Association. His father died of ALS.

Noah writes: *"In everyone's life there comes a time when something happens that so impacts your life you can't help but discover what really matters most. Certainly anyone impacted by ALS knows this reality because after the diagnosis of ALS, the day to day suddenly disappears and each day matters more - more than you dare to imagine.*

"I thought the subject of What Matters Most was particularly relevant for emotional survival in the face of ALS because even when staring at devastation people can, with day to day heroism, rise to higher levels. And I wanted to honor and share those private triumphs. To do less would diminish the human spirit and let the illness triumph."

STORY ONE:

Pure Gold

When we are young we are inclined to think that success in life is measured by how much you can grab. But, as we get older, and perhaps wiser, we come to understand that real success in life is realizing what you don't need, what is unessential, and what matters most.

In some way this is similar to the smelting of gold. Heavy ore is crushed under pressure and what is not necessary is taken away. What remains is what is truly valuable, what matters most.

This story was sent to me by Matthew J. It made me cry. It also reminded me of the real power of love and that the drama of ALS can also be the heart's triumph.

"My wife and best friend Adelle and I have been married for 23 years. Adelle was diagnosed with ALS in July 2002.

"Now almost everything I married Adelle for has been taken away. Before she was diagnosed Adelle was the kindest, most wonderful person I've ever known. Now - she is more so . . .

"I loved being with her everyday - we were never apart – now she is a permanent resident in Hospice.
I loved talking with her – now her voice is silenced.
I loved walking with her – now she's totally paralyzed.
I loved being intimate with her – now we've not been together in over four years.
I loved her wonderful cooking – now frozen dinners are the norm.
We had a wonderful home – now it is lost - mortgaged to pay for ALS expenses.

"BUT WHAT MATTERS MOST ? ? ?
Our LOVE for each other is stronger than ever.
Our faithfulness to one another is stronger than ever.
We have a wonderful son (17 years old). He's wiser than ever. He's more independent than ever.
We appreciate the non-material things more (things that cannot be bought).
I value the limited time I have left with Adelle. Time with her is precious.
She's prettier than ever.
She's sweeter than ever.
She's kinder than ever.

"ALS has given us a clearer, crisper vision of WHAT MATTERS MOST in life. ALS has tested us in ways most people never experience. I feel honored to be married to such a wonderful woman - this test has made her a better person – and it has tested me as a husband, father and man. I was in heavy combat during Vietnam - and although that was absolutely terrible - it ended in 12 months. ALS isn't that merciful - it scrapes, tears and grinds a family - right to the core - right to our marrow. But we are emerging - as refined gold – pure gold - without dross."

A lot of us spend our lifetime in the pursuit of fool's gold. This is not because we are fools, but because we spend our lives pursuing what everyone else tells us and advertising sells us, as what matters most.

For some of us, it is only an earthshaking event, good or bad, that can cause us to wake up and smell the truth. For some of us, even waking up to the nightmare of ALS can have the transforming power to see what pure gold is.

At the end of his letter to me, Matthew wrote:

"Adelle's sweet spirit remains - sweetened more by this terrible trial called ALS. She remains my best friend - and my hero. Thanks for listening."

Thank you Matthew and Adelle. Thank you for your love, and by your love, your reminder. You thank us for listening. And in some way that is my prayer. I pray that all who are reading this are listening and remembering what matters most.

STORY TWO:

The Cure

When I was a child I was plagued by nightmares. On reflection these were probably not any worse than most kids have, but I was the first born, and my mom was super loving, and so she dragged me to the pediatrician for a cure.

I don't remember what he asked me, or if he asked me anything about what might be causing my fearful nights, but he sure had the cure. He prescribed these giant capsules that I was to take before going to bed. The prospect of having to swallow the monster pills was greater than any monster under my pillow, and I soon assured my mother that the dreams had stopped.

Sometimes struggling to deal with something we never would have signed up for serves us in ways we never would have requested. And sometimes takes us to a better place even if we have to go through hell to get there.

Often what matters most doesn't just knock on our door, it kicks our door down, stomps into our life, and screams at us to pay attention. Surely such a visitor is ALS. ALS will get any of us to sit up and pay attention and not only think about what matters most, but what matter's least and what we may have been foolishly paying for with our lives.

This story was sent to me by Debbie E. I can only imagine it must have taken a great deal of courage for her to share her honesty and at the same time her honesty was her cure. Alcoholism is one of the biggest bear traps in life's jungle. Anyone who doesn't think so is all the more vulnerable. Debbie's discovered her cure in discovering what matters most.

"Thank you for asking me to write something. It would be an honor. Here goes: The day was December 5, 1989. I was actually living with my Dad and Uncle because my life had been so impacted by alcoholism that I had no place else to go. They generously took me in. Then, while we were sitting at dinner, my Dad announced that he had been to the doctor that day and was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's Disease. We cried over our cocktails, and it was at that moment that I knew I should never take another drink. What mattered most was that I got to spend time with my Dad during his last year, until we met again.

"I thank God for that moment in time, because He opened my eyes to see that life was not about drinking, but it was about being there for others. As a family we went to support groups together, we laughed, we cried and we prayed. After God took my Dad home, I knew I was supposed to return to school to become a Therapist. I never took another drink after that day and I know that my Dad is watching and smiling —I know he's proud."

When we are called into court and asked to give witness, we are told to hold up our hand and swear we will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. All personal transformation begins with self-witnessing. But that means we must, in our life and in our life's struggles with our biggest demons, be prepared to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Debbie's grand inquisitor in the court of life was ALS. And her cure, her triumph, wasn't only her recovery from alcoholism, but sobriety in the time remaining with her father, and a reminder of what matters most for the whole rest of her life. Debbie's victory on top of triumph was that she went on to become a therapist and an ally to others.

ALS didn't give Debbie back her life. Debbie did that. What ALS did was give her, and can give any of us, is the opportunity to rise to our highest level at times when we feel the lowest.

It was General Patton who said, "Success is how high you bounce after you've hit bottom." Surely, somewhere in that bounce, somewhere along the way, who among us will not have an opportunity to learn what matters most. Here's to all of us who are trying. And trying again. You are not alone. Remember that!

If you would like to write to Noah or send him your story about What Matters Most contact him at

Noah@NoahbenShea.com.

NOAH BENSHEA'S COLUMN WHAT MATTERS MOST CAN BE FOUND ON THE ALS ASSOCIATION WEBSITE AT
http://www.alsa.org/benshea/most.cfm.

Dog Tales: Wagging and Working in Loyal Service

Did you know most service dogs typically undergo a two-year training program to learn verbal commands or hand signals before being paired with their owners? These dogs aid people with special needs, including those with ALS, by retrieving items, pulling wheelchairs and completing many other tasks.

Kathy Hult and Joy in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

As treasurer of the Hopkins, Minn.-based Helping Paws, Inc., Kathy Hult understands service dog training on both a professional and personal level. Hult has had Lou Gehrig's Disease since early 1999 and has worked with her seven-year-old Labrador Retriever, Joy, for almost five years. "Her name fits perfectly," says Hult, 54, a resident of Eden Prairie located west of Minneapolis.

Some of the duties Hult's furry friend helps her perform include opening doors, turning light switches on and off, and removing socks or a coat. She learned about Helping Paws while volunteering at a neurology clinic where she met a lady with multiple sclerosis who was using a service dog. Within a year, the organization teamed Hult with Joy, and the two underwent a demanding three-week training period where they developed a close bond.

"Anywhere I go, Joy goes with me – to restaurants, shopping, movies, running errands, etc.," Hult continues. "She's very well trained and disciplined to lie at my feet. In restaurants, people don't even know she's there."

Fellow Midwesterner Jack Maypark also worked with Helping Paws to get his service dog, Credo, a three-year-old Golden Retriever. Diagnosed with ALS in 2003, Maypark uses a powered wheelchair. Credo, Maypark and his wife Bonna visit middle schools in Eau Claire, Wis., to educate students about ALS and how service dogs help those living with disabilities. "The companionship is unbelievable," says Maypark, 63, of Credo.

Credo's namesake means "I believe" in Latin; he received this moniker from his foster family who initially trained him. "Credo knows about 60 commands," Maypark says. "Most of them are verbal." In fact, when Bonna and Jack go out to eat, Jack utters the phrase "under" which signals for Credo to sit under the table until Jack is ready to leave the restaurant.

"Service dogs are a wonderful source of company for people living with ALS," states Sharon Matland, vice president of The Association's Patient Services Department. "More importantly, these dogs offer their owners greater independence."

Along with this independence, people have the responsibility to see that the dogs are well cared for: the dogs need to be brushed, washed and have their nails clipped. In addition, these animals must maintain a healthy weight. "It's proven dogs live two years longer if they maintain a proper weight," agrees Margo Farneth, who has worked with her service dog, Sarge, since November 2006, more than a year after she received her ALS diagnosis.

Farneth, 47, lives on a 57-acre farm in New Providence, Pa., with her husband, Robert, two children, Rachel and Jake, and a Doberman pinscher named Rhema. This large parcel of land gives Sarge the opportunity to exercise. "Labs are voracious eaters," Farneth explains. She found Sarge through Susquehanna Service Dogs (SSD) located in Harrisburg, Pa.; each year, SSD places more than a dozen hearing or service dogs with people with special needs.

According to Hult, the majority of service dogs are either Labrador or Golden Retrievers since these breeds are bred to work well and for people, have a natural retrieving instinct and are an appropriate size to do a variety of tasks for individuals with varying needs. "At the same time, not all Labs or Goldens are destined to be service dogs as they are thoroughly screened for any health or behavioral issues throughout their training process," stresses Hult.

Interestingly, not all people with ALS can use a service dog. "There are two major concerns about working with service dogs—voice and energy level," Hult says. "The dogs may learn several hand signals, but most of the 75 commands they learn are verbal. The other concern is energy level. Even though the dogs are trained for about 2 to 2 and-a-half years, they need to develop trust and a strong working relationship with the person they will ultimately be assisting. That means a person with ALS will need to work daily with the dog on its training, care and exercise. Someone with a more rapid progression of the disease may not have the energy to work with the dog sufficiently to result in a great working team."

"It is crucial that persons with ALS who are considering getting a service dog have the stamina to go through team training and the support of people to help them," concurs Sally McLaughlin, with help from an assistive communication device. A mother of three who has lived with ALS since 2003 works with Decker, a three-year-old black Lab. "My friend Terry loves dogs, so she comes over to bathe Decker, brush his teeth and clean his ears." Canine Partners for Life of Cochranville, Pa., matched McLaughlin, 54, with Decker.

At first, McLaughlin wasn't sure if Canine Partners would accept her into their program as she lost her ability to speak within a year after her diagnosis, but Decker's trainer taught him to recognize and respond to hand signals. In a speech at a Canine Partners event last year, McLaughlin cited her dog's strengths as "his adaptability" and "his patience." McLaughlin and Decker successfully completed their three-week "doggy boot camp" training last summer.

Despite the obligations of caring for a service dog, everyone agrees the animals bring them great joy. "I have to concentrate on taking care of Credo instead of focusing on my disease," Maypark says.

"Sarge has enhanced my life tremendously," Farneth declares. "I'm not the lady in the wheelchair; I'm the lady with the cool dog."

1 Jack and Bonna Maypark with Credo at a school in Eau Claire, Wis.

2 Kathy Hult and Joy aboard a cruise ship in Alaska

3 Sally McLaughlin and Decker

4 Margo Farneth, center with (left to right) son Jake with family dog Rhema, husband Robert, daughter Rachel with service dog Sarge

5 Sarge takes a break

6 Margo Farneth and her dog, Sarge, share a seat

To learn more about service dog organizations, search www.alsa.org for your local The ALS Association chapter.

ALS ADVOCATES

DELIVER MESSAGE TO NATION'S CAPITOL

In May, 2007, people with ALS, families and caregivers from all 50 states joined together in Washington, D.C., for The ALS Association's 10th National ALS Advocacy Day and Public Policy Conference.

ALS Association chapters and advocates, including former baseball greats Tommy John and Kent Hrbek, met with 456 Members of Congress to advance The Association's public policy priorities, which included the ALS Registry Act and increased research funding at the Department of Defense. In addition to Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill, the three-day conference featured empowering educational sessions as well as an emotional Candlelight Vigil held at the World War II Memorial, an appropriate setting as studies continue to find elevated rates of the disease occurring in military veterans. These photographs, taken at this year's conference, capture the emotion and enthusiasm that make the conference such a powerful event in the fight for treatments and cure for ALS.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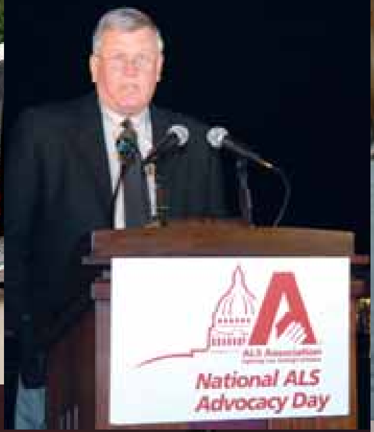
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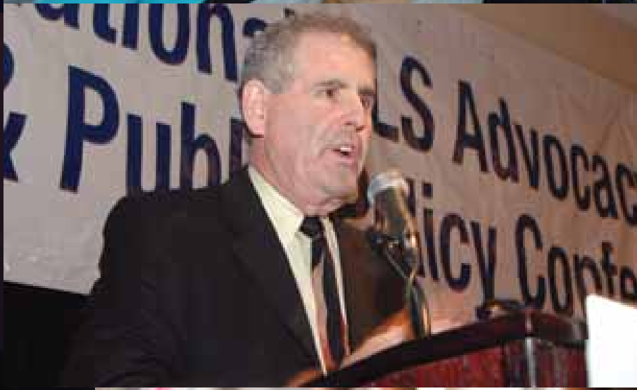
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CONNECTICUT

By Roberta Friedman, Ph.D.

In Living Color:

Glowing Cells Illuminate ALS

Scientists seeking treatments for ALS often turn to lab models to find out how the disease works. Testing a potential therapy in a cell as it tries to maintain itself while growing in a dish, or in a mouse with an ALS gene mutation navigating a treadmill, gives hope that a potential candidate treatment successful in these models might work in people.

The mainstay of ALS research has been the SOD1 mutant mouse and rat. These rodents are engineered genetically to make the mutated SOD1 protein that is able to cause ALS in people. A few percent of all ALS cases can be attributed to a change in this protein (the abbreviation stands for copper-zinc superoxide dismutase). The mutant SOD1 mice and rats show symptoms that mimic many aspects of the disease, following closely the human sequence of ALS progression: the nerve endings detach from muscle, these motor neurons die, and the animals eventually lose the ability to walk properly.

Several compounds can delay the loss of movement and extended the lifespan of SOD1 mutant rodents slightly. But effects of the compounds have either not been robust, or have not been repeated by other investigators. And, unfortunately, these have failed to show success in human trials. That is why ALS researchers today continue to seek additional model systems to complement and extend the value of the SOD1 mutant animals.

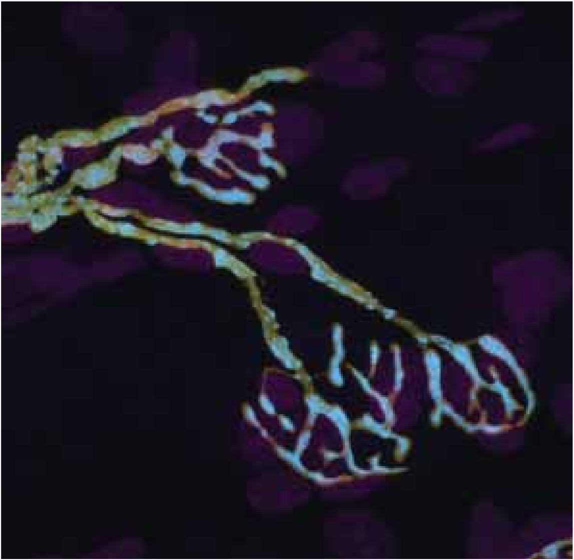
Funded in part by a grant from The ALS Association to Robert Burgess, Ph.D., at The Jackson Laboratory, Bar Harbor, Maine, investigators engineered mice in which the cellular "power plants" called mitochondria are selectively altered by gene manipulation to glow under the microscope. These are mice that show in living color how energy supplies are maintained by nerve cells all the way to the junction with muscle. The so-called MitoMice display their mitochondria as blue in color by means of a fluorescent flag.

Burgess is collaborating with Harvard researcher Jeff Lichtman, M.D., Ph.D., an expert at tagging crucial molecules to reveal how living cells go about their business in animals that are deeply anesthetized and viewed while alive, under a special microscope. Burgess is funded by The Alan L. Phillips Quest for a Cure Award, made possible through support from Morton and Malvina Charlestein.

The techniques may be able to show the first signs of ALS in which nerve endings detach from their targets and start to shrivel. The new found ability to see mitochondria flow towards the nerve endings, published in the journal Nature Methods, will help show exactly how these cell organelles may be involved. "I hope this progress will prompt others in the ALS field to take advantage of the mice," Burgess said, "experiments in SOD1 mice will be the next step in this project."

The mitochondria in motor neurons must reach to and contract muscle, in some instances up to a meter away from their cell bodies in the spinal cord. Scientists suspect that the flow of mitochondria is impaired in ALS in a way that specifically hampers the motor neurons due to their far flung supply lines.

By crossing MitoMice with the SOD1 mutated mice, any resulting changes in mitochondria transport might lead to important advances in understanding the disease process and how to alter it.



Mitochondria in motor neurons in transgenic mice making a blue fluorescent protein fused with a mitochondrial protein. The mitochondria are in a nerve ending on muscle. The cell nuclei are counterstained in purple. Image courtesy of Dr. Thomas Misgeld.

By Dan Gordon

ALS Association™
Fighting Lou Gehrig's Disease

main logo

ALS Association is BRANDNEW

For more than 20 years, The ALS Association has led the fight to improve the lives of people and their families who are battling Lou Gehrig's Disease, while searching for viable new treatments and, ultimately, a cure.

Now, the only not-for-profit voluntary health organization dedicated solely to the fight against is forging ahead with a fresh brand identity – including a newly designed logo, themeline, and vision, mission, and values statements – reflective of that leadership role.

The comprehensive branding initiative marks the first time The Association has re-branded its identity since its founding in 1985. With the release of the new brand, The Association launched a public awareness campaign that will include print advertisements and radio spots.

The new logo – a hand touching a vibrant red-lettered "A," developed in partnership with Minneapolis-based advertising agency Campbell Mithun – is "a bold and simple visual representation of our vision to leave no stone unturned in our quest to create a world without ALS," says Jeff Snyder, vice president of communications of The Association. The logo represents The Association's unending, heartfelt pledge to fight on every front to improve life for those with ALS, through three focused areas of expertise and commitment: research to find new treatments and a cure, advocacy at the highest levels of government, and comprehensive care and support services for ALS patients and their families. The hand symbolizes The Association's reaching out to people with ALS as well as to the researchers who are being enlisted to join the fight to find treatments and a cure; it also evokes of The ALS Association's pledge to continue to champion people affected by the devastating disease.

podium banner

Reflecting The ALS Association's sole focus, as well as research indicating that ALS is associated with the baseball legend after which it is named, the red-lettered "A" in the logo sits atop a new theme line, written in black letters: "Fighting Lou Gehrig's Disease."

The re-branding culminates a two-year effort that began when The Association marked its 20th anniversary in 2005. "We recognized that The ALS Association had significantly grown and advanced in its ability to serve the ALS community," says Snyder. "To acknowledge and underscore that growth, it was time for the logo to advance too – to better reflect our leadership, dedication and role as the champion of the cause of people with ALS."

That commitment is spelled out in The Association's new mission statement: "To lead the fight to cure and treat ALS through global cutting-edge research, and to empower people with Lou Gehrig's Disease and their families to live fuller lives by providing them with compassionate care and support."

Concludes Gary A. Leo, president and CEO of the re-branding effort: "This is far more than a fresh image. A new logo, vision and mission are exciting, but actions speak louder than words and images. Our organization delivers on its promises and always will."

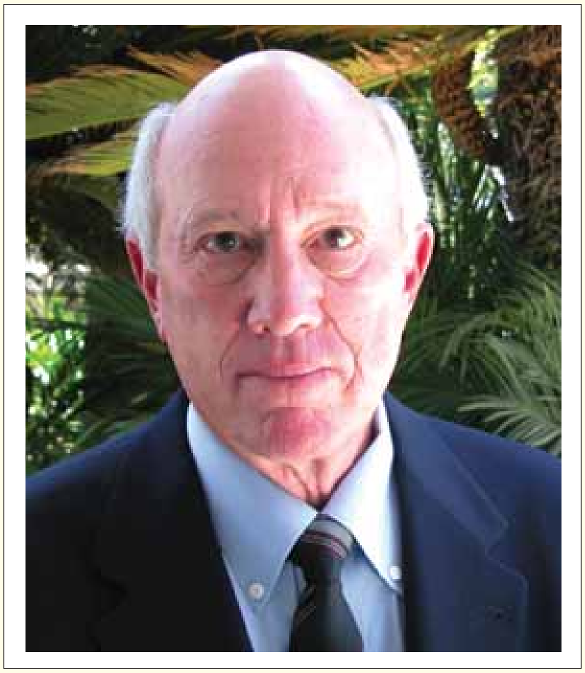
ALS Association™
Fighting Lou Gehrig's Disease
National ALS Advocacy Day

ALS Association™
Fighting Lou Gehrig's Disease
Advancing Global Research

ALS Association™
Fighting Lou Gehrig's Disease
Curt's Pitch for ALS

ALS Association™
Fighting Lou Gehrig's Disease
The Lou Gehrig Legacy Society

website



Ed McCurtain II

In his Father's Name

Edmund McCurtain, Sr. was a remarkable man. Having been a part of "the greatest generation," he served in the Army during World War II, working at the Pentagon. After the war, Edmund moved his family to the Midwest and began his career as a college sociology professor, where he touched and influenced many lives, but none more than his son, Ed McCurtain II.

Edmund was a person that any son would be proud to have as a father. Being an avid sports enthusiast, he taught and played many sports with Ed. "As a professor, he had a lot of time off during the summer, so we would always throw the baseball around and did a lot of batting practice," recalls Ed. Theirs was a relationship that would evoke envy in almost any father and son.

The positive influence that Edmund had on his son's life translated into Ed junior's successful career as a sales and marketing executive for various high technology companies. By 1980, Ed was 36 and living in Northern California. It was during this time that Ed received the shocking news that his father had been diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's Disease.

"We did not know a lot about ALS," Ed revealed "so we read as much as we could in medical journals and books." Ed flew to Seattle, Washington, to be with his father and mother every month and then every weekend as the disease progressed. "My father received help from the local V.A. hospital, where the staff actually knew a lot about ALS. We also hired a practical nurse that came to the house a few times a week to give my mom a much needed break."

By Daniel Gonzales
Staff Writer

“Theirs was a relationship that would evoke envy in almost any father and son.”

During the final stages of the disease, Ed’s father could no longer speak. Because of their strong bond they could just look at each other and have wonderful conversations. “He was very graceful going through ALS,” Ed recalls of his father’s fight with the disease. “He handled it fairly well knowing that there was nothing he could do about it. My dad retained his sense of humor all along.”


Edmund McCurtain Sr. and wife Maurine

Edmund passed away from ALS in 1984, leaving behind a wife of 47 years, two daughters, and a son, who had lost his best friend. Ed’s loss soon turned into a quest to help find a cure for Lou Gehrig’s Disease.

Ed started supporting The ALS Association in the mid 1980’s and his giving has never ceased. His interest lies with ALS research, and he has been a Research Council member for many years. “Genetics research interests me, but I think the mouse and rat models of ALS are good ways to pursue treatments,” states Ed. In addition to his continual giving, Ed also included The Association in his estate plans.

In 2006, Ed became a member of The ALS Association’s National Board of Trustees in an effort to become even more involved with The Association’s mission. His extensive background as an executive in the competitive international computer arena will no doubt prove to be a significant resource for the Board and the entire organization.

“In just a short period of time, Ed has proven his willingness to tackle the diverse challenges facing The ALS Association in dealing with such areas as strategic planning, marketing, finance, investment and fundraising. He brings a wealth of organizational management, business development and a passion for our cause,” states Gary Leo, The ALS Association’s President and CEO.

Fortunately, no other member of Ed’s family has been diagnosed with ALS, but that has not hindered his commitment to the thousands of people living with the disease. The legacy of Edmund McCurtain, Sr. may live on through his son’s name, but his spirit survives through his son’s actions. Ed’s relentless fight against ALS is unwavering and exemplifies his commitment to finding a cure.

By Katie Sweeney

Living With ALS

Walk Team – Mike's Miracles

Grass Roots Effort Starts With Single Step

Stacy and Michael with Beautiful Bakersfield Award

When Michael Gagner was diagnosed with ALS in 1999, he felt like he'd "been kicked in the stomach 10 times."

"Everything you don't know, you start filling in negative information," says Gagner, 50. "You start feeling like the end is near."

His outlook changed, however, when he and his wife, Stacy Inman, began attending a support group run by the Greater Los Angeles Chapter of The ALS Association. They saw people living with ALS—and keeping a sense of humor about it. And they gained invaluable information about how to deal with daily challenges.

"We were uplifted," Gagner says. "We felt like, OK, we can deal with this."

The problem? The support group was in the Los Angeles area—a two-hour drive from their home in Bakersfield, Calif. Although the couple continued to attend for the next four years, they found themselves wishing for more ALS Association services in Bakersfield and Kern County.

In 2004, they met with Fred Fisher, president and CEO of the Greater Los Angeles Chapter, about how to bring more services to their area. Fisher's suggestion: start a Walk to D'Feet ALS, which could fund the Chapter's expansion in the county.

Gagner and Inman went to work—and raised $35,000 through that first Walk in October 2004. A month later, the Chapter's first support group was held at the local library in Bakersfield. Today, the Bakersfield Walk has grown tremendously, raising $116,000 in 2006. As a result, the Chapter now offers a range of services to Kern County residents, including a support group, dedicated case manager, equipment loan closet and "Ask the Expert" community education seminars.

"Michael and Stacy have been the key to our ability to raise funds and serve patients in Kern County," Fisher explains. "Without them, this wouldn't have happened."

The pair exemplify the grass-roots nature of The Association and its goal of improving the lives of people with ALS. "The ALS Association is dedicated to helping PALS and their families live fuller lives by providing compassionate care and support despite limitations of the disease," explains Sharon Matland, R.N., M.B.A., vice president of patient services for The Association.

For their efforts, Gagner and Inman, who have an 11-year-old son, Bryce, recently were honored with a Beautiful Bakersfield Award, presented by the Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce to residents who help make the community a better place to live.

Inman says helping others has given them a sense of purpose—and lifted their spirits, too. "When you're focused on helping other people, you don't worry so much about your own problems," she adds.

After eight years of living with ALS, they're now the veterans, dispensing advice about how to deal with everything from buttoning buttons to the importance of making a list of things you want to do in your life—and then doing them.

"There are lots of ways to fight ALS," explains Gagner, who also has a 28-year-old daughter and 1-year-old grandson. "If I can help one person solve one problem, then I've done a big thing."

By Daniel Gonzales
Staff Writer

An Unbreakable Bond

Sisters Gerlinde Lindner and Elizabeth Crossley

Despite being separated by the massive Atlantic Ocean, Elizabeth Crossley was incredibly close to her sister, Gerlinde Lindner. Having grown up in Austria, Elizabeth had to make the heartbreaking decision to leave her home and family to move to the United States with her new husband in 1954. Although thousands of miles separated them, Elizabeth and Gerlinde were always there for each other during difficult times.

In the late 70's, Gerlinde's first husband died in a car accident and she was left alone to raise her four young sons. Elizabeth was immediately there to provide strength and support, but their greatest battle was yet to come. In late 2001, Gerlinde had dental surgery and experienced slurred speech afterwards. She attributed it to her dental procedure, but the numbness slowly moved down to her arms and legs. Gerlinde eventually received the shocking news in 2002 that she had Lou Gehrig's Disease.

Nobody in her family ever had the disease, so Gerlinde knew very little about it. "It took awhile before anyone knew what ALS was. I flew to Salzburg, Austria twice to be with my sister and together we learned about the disorder and how to live with it," recalls Elizabeth.

In March, 2004, Gerlinde lost her battle with ALS. After spending some time to grieve, Elizabeth decided to take a stand against ALS. "I wanted to help more by supporting ALS research and raising awareness of this disease," explains Elizabeth. Like many family members who have lost a loved one to this disease, Elizabeth started to make contributions to The ALS Association. Eventually she decided to include The Association in her will and in doing so she became a member of The Lou Gehrig Legacy Society.

Elizabeth continued to make several gifts a year until she realized that she could do even more to support The ALS Association. In 2006, she transferred an existing annuity to establish a gift annuity with The ALS Association. In doing so, Elizabeth received a one-time income tax charitable deduction. She will also receive regular payments from The ALS Association for the rest of life, after which the remaining funds will be distributed to The Association.

"I wish I could give more," Elizabeth modestly explains, adding, "I learned so much about ALS and I know it's a very difficult and complex disease. I want to do everything I can to help find a cure."

Elizabeth Crossley is proof that you do not need to be a millionaire to make a significant impact in the fight against Lou Gehrig's Disease. There are many options available for those who wish to do more. Elizabeth would give everything she has to have Gerlinde back. Instead, she is doing everything she can so that others do not have to lose a loved one to such a devastating disease.

To learn more about making a bequest to The ALS Association, contact David Moses, Director, Gift Planning, at (888) 949-2577, ext. 212, or via e-mail: dmoses@alsa-national.org. You can also visit The Association's gift planning web site at www.alsa.org/giftplanning.

To receive information in the mail, complete and mail the coupon below. All inquiries will be strictly confidential.

Attention:
Office of Gift Planning

☐ I am interested in learning more about charitable gift annuities.
Please contact me.

☐ I would consider remembering The ALS Association in my will, trust or other estate plan.

☐ I have already remembered The ALS Association in my will, trust or other estate plan.

Name: ____________________

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Zip: ____________________

Phone number: ____________________

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Mail the completed form to: Director of Gift Planning,
The ALS Association,
27001 Agoura Road, Suite 150, Calabasas Hills, CA, 91301-5104,
or visit www.alsa.org/gift planning or fax to: (818) 880-9006.

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Learn more at
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