

MISSION POSSIBLE:

in search of a cure



DONNA JENKINS

Just imagine one day you awaken to find that you are no longer able to button your shirt. You find it difficult to lift more than 10 pounds. You get yourself to a doctor's office and, after a battery of tests, the doctor informs you there is a good chance you have amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) or Lou Gehrig's disease.

Such was the reality for Donna Jenkins and her husband, Doug, on a cold day in 2006. "When Doug was first diagnosed," Donna said, "It was unbearable! We dreamed of growing old together and had plans for retirement. ALS really is one of the worst diseases on the planet."

With an estimated 5,000 people diagnosed each year, ALS is one of the most common neuromuscular diseases. It is a rapidly progressive, invariably fatal disease that attacks the nerve cells responsible for controlling voluntary muscles. The worst part of this disease is that victims are very

aware of how trapped they are in their own bodies as the deterioration continues.

"As devastating as this disease was for us," Donna elaborated, "we made a pact that we would continue to go out to dinner with friends, go to the movies, ballgames, etc. It wasn't always easy, but we were determined to not let this disease bring us down. Our friends were incredible. They all said they would walk the path with us, and they all stood true to their words.

"Doug was always upbeat and positive," Donna continued. "Who knew that this personality trait would save both of us? He never complained, never questioned, 'Why me?' He accepted his fate with dignity. How could I feel sorry for myself when he was handling his death sentence with grace?"

Doug's slogan was "Doug's Dream—Mission Possible ... A Cure for ALS." Donna now dedicates her life to raising money for the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA)

in hopes of finding a cure. "Doug was passionate about raising awareness and funds to give others hope," she said. "We initiated a campaign, with his slogan as our motto, and have raised over \$150,000 for ALS research."

Donna also volunteers for the MDA, which works indefatigably to raise money for ALS with telethons, walk-a-thons, and lock downs. This year's premier event is a spectacular fundraiser titled Muscle Team® 2010 that will take place on May 20th from 6:00-10:00 pm at the NASCAR Plaza in Charlotte. On



DONNA & HUSBAND DOUG AT MDA BENEFIT

this incredible evening, guests are invited to join players and coaches from the Carolina Panthers and the Charlotte Bobcats, as well as NASCAR stars and corporate executives, who will be "Motoring Up The Muscle For A Cure" to raise money for funding future research and services.

"I will do whatever I can to share my journey with those who are now walking in my shoes," Donna said. "Although the cards they were dealt stink, they don't have to fight the battle alone. It was Doug's dream to do whatever he could to raise funds for research ... it is now my mission to make his dream come true."

MAY IS ALS AWARENESS MONTH!

Donna has created an ALS awareness bracelet to raise funds and awareness for ALS research. The charm says, "Mission Possible...Cure ALS."



The bracelets are \$25.00 and come in two sizes, Regular (7 1/4") and Relaxed (7 3/4"). All proceeds go to the MDA for research. To purchase a bracelet, visit www.dkjconcepts.com.

For more information about Muscle Team 2010, contact Jenae Smith at 704-567-2912. To donate to Doug's Dream, call the MDA office at 704-567-2912.



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