

Our Anniversary with NEW Health

Nancy and Rob recently celebrated their 51st Wedding Anniversary! They have raised 3 beautiful daughters, had challenging and rewarding careers, are enjoying grandchildren, and are DEDICATED WALKERS. They walk to maintain their health and enjoy the precious days full of the things they love. Daily walking has become a regular part of each day . . . for some pretty remarkable reasons.



Nancy was diagnosed with Emphysema and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) in the early 80's. In 1992, she had double pneumonia in both lungs and had a respiratory arrest. She made an amazing recovery and returned to work. In 2001, her doctor recommended an evaluation at the Cleveland Clinic due to the condition of one lung. Was she a candidate for a lung transplant? Not a simple determination; tests and monitoring for 3 years revealed that she indeed was a good candidate for a lung transplant. On Jan. 31, 2004 Nancy got a call at 3:00 p.m. – “We have your lung!” Nancy and Rob raced home to grab a bag that was packed, hopped on a turbo prop plane, landed at Burke Airport in Cleveland, were put into a squad care to the clinic, and Nancy was in surgery at 7:00 p.m.! *Doctors told Nancy that she was a miracle and out of the hospital in 9 days!* For 2 months Cleveland became home – allowing Nancy to recover and get the follow-up care needed. On their way home, Nancy was notified that she was in rejection and went immediately to Sparrow Hospital for treatment. Another new discovery, drug-induced (IV steroids) diabetes.

Through this incredible journey, the medical team always advised Nancy to keep active. They told her that regular exercise and medication would work together to keep her stabilized.

Nancy routinely walks 3 or more miles 5 days each week and does daily floor stretching exercises. The osteopenia in her left hip is better, and her last stress test “blew the Doctor out of the water!” *Nancy will celebrate her 6th anniversary with just one lung on Jan. 31st.* (They left part of one lung that is about 20% viable.)

Rob has another amazing story. He had his *first heart attack at age 37.* He went on to have *3-bypass surgeries* in 1981, 1988 and 1995. He had a respiratory arrest in 2004 and was in a coma for 13 days. Nancy was told he had less than a 5% chance to live. Another unbelievable recovery! Rob has chronic congestive heart failure, along with COPD/Pulmonary Fibrosis. He also has a pacemaker and defibrillator. His treatment plan includes healthy eating, exercise and medication. Rob meets up with several buddies that have heart issues too, and they ***walk 5 days a week!*** They call them selves the “Old Farts Club”, walk – stand – rest – walk, share stories, laugh and solve the problems of the world during their trek around the Lansing Mall 1-mile loop.

Keep up the great work Nancy and Rob, what rich and inspirational lives you lead. Thank you for sharing your stories with us and joining us at the WWU.

Happy Days . . . Happy Walking!

Submitted by Alicia Armstrong, CPH Chair-person