



DON'S STORY

I've had heart trouble since the 1970's. Heart trouble runs in my family although none of us smoke or are overweight. My father had bypass surgery along with three of my five brothers, and my first cousin had bypass surgery three times. On April 7, 1993 I had bypass surgery to correct five blocked arteries. I was continually under doctors' care, and the last time I was in the hospital the cardiologist told my wife and me that there was nothing more she could do and we should consider heart transplant surgery. After a few minutes, we decided heart transplant surgery was the best option, and I was put on

Many times I think of my donor and her family and how I can't thank them enough for the wonderful gift of life they've given me.

the waiting list. It took 16 months, but on March 31, 1999 I got the call from my transplant coordinator at UW Hospital and Clinics.

I received my new heart from a 32-year-old woman who died in a tragic motorcycle accident. Nineteen days later I was released from the hospital. The doctors said I was the first patient with a permanent ileostomy on whom they had done a heart transplant. Despite not having a colon, I absorbed my medicine well enough to have a great recovery. About four years after transplant surgery, I built a room addition, screen porch, put up a wall and built a shed!

If you chose to become a donor:

- Answer “yes” to the organ donor question on your driver’s license renewal application.
- Sign your license or ID card.
- **Tell your family** about your decision, to help ensure your wishes are honored.

For more information on organ donation, visit uwhcopo.org.



UWHealth
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Organ Procurement Organization