

# LACC Team Spotlight – Team MQ

Among the crowd of participants in last October's FILA City Challenge 5k/10k Run benefiting the Hirshberg Foundation were people, and a pooch, wearing t-shirts with the bold purple logo "Team MQ." This eager group was present to support runner Monique Lewis, a pancreatic cancer survivor who was diagnosed in December 1996. After doctors discovered a tumor in the head of her pancreas, they gave her from three to six months to live.

Team MQ was the brainchild of Monique's husband, Austin. When the couple, who live in the San Francisco area, decided to participate in the FILA City Challenge last October in Los Angeles, Austin contacted a number of friends and family. According to Monique, "He asked them to send a card of encouragement to me for race day. People then asked if they could give money. He said yes and the money started coming in."

Monique says she didn't know anything about Team MQ until she arrived in L.A. for the race. Monique explains, "Austin had t-shirts and hats made up for my family and friends. He presented me with the cards, money, t-shirts and hats the day before the race. Needless to say, I was overwhelmed by it all." Team MQ raised almost \$4,000 for the Hirshberg Foundation, all of which will benefit pancreatic cancer research at UCLA. In addition, Monique won the FILA City Challenge Grand Prize, two roundtrip tickets on Southwest Airlines, for turning in the most pledge money.

Monique claims she is "doing well" despite the fact that she has "tons of cancer." Lewis focuses on staying healthy while on chemotherapy and while participating in an experimental drug trial. "I try and eat right, exercise and eat chocolate, daily. I know how lucky I am to have lasted this long. I've had so many bad scans where doctors tell me it's all over that I've stopped

asking what the doctors think. I just live day to day.” Runners can expect to see more purple t-shirts this October 8<sup>th</sup> at the 2000 FILA City Challenge. Monique remains positive, saying, “We plan to be there next year too.”

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## **Angela Never Gives Up!**

In honor of her parents and grandmother, Angela found the motivation to reach her fundraising goal and complete the FILA Challenge 5k/10k. Her letter clearly made an impact on her community because she raised over \$3,300 worth of pledges! She successfully met her goals, paid tribute to her family, and put one foot in front of the other to finish the race., demonstrating her commitment to never give up!

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## **Event Spotlight – Couple Raises Funds and Honors Mom at Wedding**

When Aleen Zimberoff Bayard, 40, began planning her wedding to Brent Greenberg, 52, she very much wanted the ceremony and whole event to be a reflection of who they were as a couple and as individuals, and to express their values and commitments in life. Aleen had just recently lost her mom, Dorothy Zimberoff, 62, to pancreatic cancer, and wanted to honor her mother’s

memory during such an important benchmark in her life.

Since this was her second marriage and his third, Aleen and Brent decided to ask for charitable donations in lieu of gifts. The bride, who owns a marketing and public relations consulting firm, and the groom, a radiologist, chose three causes, and included an insert with the information in their wedding invitations. In addition to our Foundation, they also selected the Evans Scholars Fund, which gives college tuition to golf caddies (Brent sits on the Board of Directors of the Western Golf Association), and The Hunger Project, a global organization dedicated to ending world hunger.

The newlyweds feel very positive about their decision, for a variety of reasons. Aleen explains, “We didn’t know how much people gave, so it kept a lot of privacy in each guest’s ‘purchase.’ And, instead of getting linens and toasters, we’re actually making a difference in the world.” Aleen also found the idea to be educational. “People now know that very specific research projects, such as those funded by the Hirshberg Foundation, exist for specific types of cancer. Rather than simply supporting agencies such as the American Cancer Society, we were able to directly support pancreatic cancer research.”

Aleen’s mom was “extremely healthy” prior to her disease, which was first incorrectly diagnosed as pancreatitis. Aleen reflects, “My mom had the most incredible attitude. She never complained.” Even when she had a permanent needle inserted into her clavicle and she underwent chemotherapy around the clock, Dorothy found a way to see the side of the positive side of things. “The pump system weighed about five pounds and she had to wear it constantly. She nicknamed the pump ‘Hymie’ after the Hebrew word ‘L’Chaim,’ which means ‘To Life.’”

In the end, the couple has no idea how much was raised for their

charities, but they do know that Dorothy was “with them” on their wedding day. Aleen explains, “It really helped me bring my mom’s presence into the space in a very respectful and loving way. I felt the loss, definitely, but rather than dwelling on having her missing from my side, I was able to feel better knowing that we were helping others in her condition. Maybe other daughters in the future will not lose their parents to this disease.”

Editor’s note: To date, the Ronald S. Hirshberg Memorial Foundation has received over \$7,000 from guests of Aleen and Brent’s wedding, all of which has gone to support pancreatic cancer research at UCLA. Furthermore, Aleen, a public speaker, has also begun asking clients and associates to make a contribution to the Foundation in lieu of a speaker’s fee.

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## **Event Spotlight – Family Marches in 4th of July Parade to Honor Terry Vawter**

Glenn Vawter was able to combine fun with fundraising during an annual family vacation last summer. Vawter, whose wife Terry died of pancreatic cancer last year, took his daughter and grandchildren to Catalina Island for a short getaway from their home in Las Vegas.

As they do each year, the Vawter family marched in the Catalina Island Fourth of July Parade. This time, however, they decided to collect money for pancreatic cancer research. Terry’s

daughter and granddaughter pushed a stroller decorated with a homemade sign saying "Donations in Memory of Terry (Granny)–Pancreatic Cancer Research–Hirshberg Foundation." Vawter and his grandsons followed behind the stroller, each holding a corner of the flag. According to Glenn, "To our surprise, people threw money in the flag." That day the Vawters raised almost \$600 for the Hirshberg Pancreatic Cancer Research Center in memory of Terry Vawter.