

EULOGY – SCOTT WIGLEY

June 27, 2010

By Jeff Wigley (Scott's brother)

“Heaven gained an amazing angel this week.” That was FaceBook message that my wife Terri sent out to all of our friends this week. Scott Wigley's story is amazing and one that I am honored to share with you.

Some of you here today knew Scott before the onset of his Multiple Sclerosis at the age of 24. Some of you only knew Scott after the onset of this disease in 1986 and his remaining 24 years.

Scott lived a normal, every-day-life growing up. We played Little League sports and many times we on the same team. In football, he was a lineman and I was the quarterback. Even then he was protecting me.

Scott loved the outdoors. While I was involved with the Boy Scouts, Scott fished and hunted with my Grandfather Cadle. Any of you that have visited my parents' home have seen the collection of trophies that my Grandfather won – most with Scott at his side. He was a very patient and tireless fisherman --- traits that would prove to be important in his later battle with MS.

We worked together with the Atlanta Braves and Falcons in the late 70's. For the Braves, Scott was an usher in the old 1st Base Picnic Area behind the Braves bench. I ushered in the 3rd Base Picnic Area and we really enjoyed our love of sports and the opportunity to get paid while doing it. (Why do professional athletes complain?) Scott won an award from the Braves for Outstanding Service. He was very outgoing and friendly --- again, traits that would characterize him throughout his life.

As anyone who knew him would attest, Scott was a likeable person who was tall, athletic, and handsome. That naturally led to his attraction to women. Now is there any one among you here today that didn't know that Scott liked good-looking women? I didn't think so!

Once he transferred to the University of Georgia, we were roommates for 2 years along with my best and oldest friend, Eric Osgood. One of my favorite stories of this time was time when Scott was dating 2 girls named “Lisa” at the same time. Eric and I could never seem to keep the stories straight and a phone message “To Scott - From Lisa” was always cause for confusion and roommate disharmony.



Finally, Scott stopped dating “the Lisas” and graduated from UGA with a degree in Advertising from the School of Journalism. He was hired by an advertising firm in Atlanta and he began what he thought would be a long and rewarding career. The time was 1984.

In the Spring of 1986, Scott and I went with a girl that I was dating --- Terri Davis – you may know her now as Terri Wigley (25 years of marriage next year and the love of my life). Scott, Terri and I, and 2 other friends went to Florida visiting Tampa and Epcot. Scott always loved to drive. He owned a 1959 Red VW in college and by now he had a new car and he was happy to do all of the driving to and from Florida. We all had a great time.

Later that Spring Terri and I got engaged and Scott got what he thought was a pinched nerve in his face. It was eventually diagnosed as Multiple Sclerosis and his and everyone’s lives changed forever.

By the Fall, Scott was walking with a cane and he was unceremoniously fired from the advertising agency due to his disability. This was prior to the Americans with Disabilities Act which wasn’t passed until 1990. Scott could have been bitter, could have been mad, and could have been vindictive but he wasn’t. He handled this most cruel twist of fate with calm, grace, dignity, a positive attitude, and a healthy dose of faith - traits that became his trademark during his fight with MS.

Scott immediately got a job with GE and worked in their Customer Care Center. (Yes, there REALLY WAS a time when a person could call an 800 number here in the US and actually speak to a fellow American!) Even though he could no longer enjoy his passion of driving, he was taken to and from work and did his job with the same positive attitude that he always had.

Scott’s health continued to decline and in 1990 he moved, along with my parents to Rome. Many of you met Scott after this time and you only knew him as a warm and friendly man in a wheelchair.

Scott loved people and enjoyed the friendship and fellowship of going to lunch with family and friends. Did I mention that Scott loved good-looking women? Like the story of the sailor with a girl in every port, Scott had a waitress in every restaurant in town. With a show of hands, how many of us experienced the best service that we have ever had while sharing lunch with Scott at any restaurant in Rome, Georgia? Do you see how many of us that Scott affected in this most simple of daily activities?

Scott’s next achievement was being instrumental in organizing and supporting the 1994 Rome MS Walk. Each year Scott was the leading fund-raiser in Rome and one of the top fund-raisers in the State. It was an early form of “American Idol” as Scott annually selected the girl that would have the honor of pushing him in his wheelchair for this event. Have I mentioned that Scott liked women?

As his disease gradually progressed, he was unable to go on the MS Walk course but he was always there to support the cause. Because of his unwavering support and his contributions to the Rome MS Walk, I am proud to announce that, with the kind permission of Roy Rangel – the State Director of the MS Society in the State of Georgia – the 2011 MS Walk in Rome will be held in honor and memory of Scott Wigley. I ask you in advance, to support this cause as Scott would have done if he were here!

His lunch dates eventually ended and his only trips from the house were to either the doctors office or to the hospital. He never lost his zest for life, his desire to be around people, and his care and concern for others even though his conditions had changed.

As far as his concern for others, I was always on his list of those that he worried about. I was in a near-fatal auto accident in December 2000 and I have occasional flair-ups with my back. In addition, Terri and I have our own company, PIT STOP, that we founded in 1995. No matter how well, or how weak, Scott was feeling, even up until the very end, he would always ask --- even if had to mouth the words: HOW IS YOUR BACK? and HOW IS PIT STOP? He was more interested in the well-being of others that he was in himself. How amazing is that?

Scott has impacted the lives of countless people – many assembled here and many others who could not be here. A role model, an inspiration, and an example of the power of positive thinking. Isn't it ironic that we have drawn our strength from a person who was not as physically strong as we are but far more strong in terms of mental outlook on life and love of the human spirit.

As I look back on my life, and I'll be 50 in January – a real reason that I should be crying now -- I have worked hard and accomplished a lot and earned the respect of family, friends, and peers. I am an Eagle Scout and served as Governor Busbee's Eagle Scout Aide. I graduated among the tops in my high school class. I graduated Phi Beta Kappa and Magna Cum Laude from the University of Georgia. I had a perfect 4.0 average in my major. I worked with IBM for 10 years and in that time, I earned the highest award that an IBM employee can receive – the IBM Means Service Award – not once, but twice. I started my own company from scratch in 1995 and, as I left to come here, we were still in business. PIT STOP has been honored to be the Runner-Up for the Cobb County Small Business of the Year Award and a Finalist for the State of Georgia Family Business of the Year Award. “Good Lord Willing,” in a little over a year, I will be president of our international industry association.

Why did I bother to tell you all of this?

Because.....of all of the awards, of all of the achievements, and all of the honors that I have earned in my life, there is no greater award.....no greater achievement.....and no greater honor than being.....SCOTT WIGLEY'S BROTHER.

