

Oh, My Marguerite....

By Doug Harrington

Forty years together...
thirty-five years of marriage.

*“She talks
to me
with her eyes,
her laugh,
and her
everlasting
smile....”*

It's both of our second marriages. Margie, as she is known by both family and friends, was diagnosed in August of 2006 with FTD but had memory symptoms in the summer of 2004. The past eleven years have been tough... hospice, caregiving, incontinence, etc. She has been in a memory care facility for the past three years after I took care of her 100% for over three years, until I could not do it

anymore. It takes a toll on you as the well spouse for your own health and sanity.

Fortunately, she has been healthy and walks every day with another patient. She is well taken care of by the facility's caregivers, nurses and visiting doctors. She has a visiting dental hygienist every week to floss and brush her teeth and also applies a fluoride. The mobile dentist drops by every three months for a cleaning and checkup. This is a very important step; the teeth and gums must be taken care of as Margie cannot brush her teeth.

At the beginning she began to lose her speech as a symptom of this disease... primary progressive aphasia (PPA), but was still very cognitive and aware, but the disease has progressed to the point that she does not recognize me or family.



Doug Harrington, pictured with his partner of 40 years, his wife, Marguerite Asher Harrington.

She does accept me as someone nice and we walk and hold hands and sit together when I visit.... I tell her that I love her very much. But it's all worth it... although she cannot talk to me she talks to me with her eyes, her laugh, and her everlasting smile and we dance, she loves it. We have very many memories in our photos, letters, cards and they all say we love each other.

As we all know, it becomes a very lonesome journey for the well spouse... no wife at home after 40 years together and I have to make the bed and wash clothes... two things I never liked but must be done now.

It's been tough to accept this disease because all our plans for the future in our retirement just come to a stop... but, you have to keep living and I have to make my own life. I am very fortunate to have the blessing of family... four kids, four step-kids, ten grandchildren and a great brother and sister-in-law and their families.... I am truly blessed. May God be good to us all in our future days.

*This essay is being published by
The Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration (www.theaftd.org)
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