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## For Suzanne

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# For Suzanne



**W**hen my wife, Suzanne Law Hasher, died two years ago of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's Disease, she left a distinguished record of accomplishment and achievement.

A 1961 Furman graduate and an elementary music teacher in Greenville County Schools for 27 years, Suzanne was also well known in the community for her singing talent. She was a former Miss Greenville talent winner, was for many years a soprano soloist at Christ Church Episcopal, and played leading roles in musicals at the Greenville Little Theatre, earning an "Oscar" for her performance in "The Music Man."

While teaching at Augusta Circle Elementary, she was one of 20 educators nationwide to receive a grant from the Metropolitan Opera to have her fourth-grade students stage an opera. She was Teacher of the Year at Augusta Circle in 1983 and twice took her chorus to perform at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston.

In short, she shared her love of music with many people, from youngsters to senior citizens. She was outgoing and vivacious, and a joy to be around.

When she was diagnosed with ALS in 2000, my two children and I were devastated. We knew that there was no cure and that the disease, which attacks and destroys the nerve cells that control voluntary muscles, would cause her body to fail her even as she remained mentally alert.

But she insisted that we carry on as best we could, and she served as a shining example to all of us. She fought with courage and dignity until her death in May 2004.

Soon thereafter, I came to realize that just as Suzanne had used her musical ability to leave a beautiful legacy, I could help assuage my grief by working to leave a legacy that honored her. I became involved in the fight against ALS.

I joined a local ALS support group and sought to find ways to educate others about the disease. A new ALS association has formed in recent months in South Carolina, and I have been proud to watch it expand its efforts to help families struggling with the disease.

I enjoyed another proud moment as well this spring, when I took part in the Walk to D'Feet ALS — held on the campus of our alma mater, Furman.

I fully realize that my family's story is not unique. No doubt hundreds of you have dealt with a debilitating illness within your own families.

I write this primarily to encourage anyone who has been in this situation to reach out to others who are grappling with the same decisions you faced. Perhaps one day your efforts will help find a cure for cancer, or MS, or ALS — whatever disease has affected your family.

By doing so, you will honor the memory of someone close to you, find a measure of solace in your grief, and support a cause that is well worth the fight.

Do it for someone you love — as I am doing it for Suzanne.

— Fred Hasher '62

*The author is a retired project manager with Harper Brothers Office Supply Co. in Greenville and a former Atlantic Coast Conference and small college basketball referee.*