



MS Callistemon League

**Meet others like you who are helping
to fast-track a cure for MS**



The MS Callistemon League

When you leave a gift in your Will, you join the MS Callistemon League, a community of compassionate and generous supporters who have committed to fast-track a cure for multiple sclerosis (MS) and continue vital support and care far into the future.

Our benefactors are rewarded with exclusive membership in the MS Callistemon League, our group of very special people who like you, are committed to ensuring those living with MS know that they are not alone.

Through your commitment, you will be there, along the journey, helping people with MS to live the best life that they can while we fast track a cure for MS. Our heartfelt thanks for your loving and thoughtful support.

We would appreciate the opportunity to recognise you for your generosity.

We offer every benefactor in the MS Callistemon League an opportunity to be featured and celebrated in the MS Celebration of Life book – the stories on the following pages come from that book. Some are still with us.

We could not be more grateful for their generosity, openness to sharing their stories, for their kindness. They will be remembered here, forever.



Jenny Wallis

“ I was 14 weeks pregnant when I first noticed my multiple sclerosis symptoms. It was 1985.

I lost the use of my right arm. Pregnant and scared, I didn't know what the problem was. I went to a neurologist for tests, and they couldn't confirm what it was at that stage because I was pregnant – but I was pretty sure I had multiple sclerosis.

When my son Paul was born, I still hadn't regained the use of my arm. It was a struggle holding, feeding and caring for a newborn with one arm.

After six months, I started having problems with my legs too. A lumbar puncture confirmed what I'd suspected all along; I had multiple sclerosis.

At the time, there were no treatments or medications available for multiple sclerosis in Australia, and over the next few years, my symptoms got worse. I started tripping and falling, so to keep my balance I started walking with a hiking stick. I named my stick 'Ada' – because it 'aids her'.

My passion to fast-track a cure for multiple sclerosis is to make sure nobody is as stricken by the disease as I was, so people can easily look after their new kids and aren't so scared to fall.

I have been living with multiple sclerosis for over 30 years and I'm a firm believer in doing whatever I can to help others with the disease. That's why I'm leaving a gift in my Will.

It's so exciting to me that people with multiple sclerosis can now live longer, fuller lives. I feel like if everyone just gave a little more, or gave a little gift in their Will, a cure could be available in my lifetime.

Simon Inwards

“ The power of music and the pursuit of a passion has helped me to stay positive while learning to live with multiple sclerosis.

When I started having symptoms in 2003, I was misdiagnosed with a number of conditions, including repetitive strain injuries and carpal tunnel syndrome. The possibility I had MS didn't even come up! It took three years to be accurately diagnosed.

Then, when I was diagnosed, things got harder still.

I faced medical retirement at just 49. I struggled to process this sudden end to my computer software career. I resisted and tried to continue working, only to have a nervous breakdown at work.

Over the next 18 months, I had to regain control of my life – so I did it through music. I've always had a musical streak, playing bass for most of my life. Multiple sclerosis made it hard to play instruments, so I moved to creating music electronically in my home studio in Canberra.

I'm now a recording artist living in Thailand, surrounded by loved ones. These days, I see my MS



in a positive light because it gives me time to focus on music. My new motto, *Think Positive*, is tattooed on my arm. But the journey's been hard.

I'm grateful for the care and support of the MS community. A wonderful counsellor helped me learn to live with an incurable illness and accept my new normal, and now I'm paying it forward by leaving a gift in my Will.

Including a gift in my Will to MS Plus has given me a great sense of satisfaction. If my gift can help current and future people living with MS, in some small way to better manage their condition, I'll be happy.





Kathy & Vic Bilbrough

Kathy and Vic married in 1991, bought a house in Forest Hill, planted a large garden and enjoyed going to concerts. But trouble was brewing. Two years into the marriage, Kathy's health declined. She experienced vision problems and became unsteady on her feet.

Kathy quickly learned she had an aggressive form of multiple sclerosis.

Kathy worked for as long as she possibly could. Later, she and Vic turned to MS Limited (now MS Plus) for support.

As her condition worsened, Kathy's parents assisted with her care, and Vic quit his job to become a full-time carer, until she died at just 41.

Vic's family believe he never stopped grieving for Kathy. He was hospitalised several times and died in 2020.

Unfortunately, Vic didn't leave a Will, but David, his brother and Administrator, had an inkling of his last wishes, so he arranged for a gift to be left in Kathy and Vic's names.

“Vic mentioned a few times he and Kathy wanted to leave a generous gift to MS Plus as a thank you for the support staff had given them,” said David.

“By leaving this gift in their names, I hope others will be supported with their MS challenges when they need help,” added David.

Even 1% or 2% of what is left after gifts to family and friends can make a huge difference. It costs nothing now, but changes so many lives in the future.

Today, the families remember Kathy as a bright star in the family firmament and Vic as a man of great wit and generosity. Perhaps elder brother Stan summed up his sibling the best: “A great bloke who gave it all a fair crack.”

Marjorie and John Jones

“**Friendship means everything to me. I have lived a busy and active life thanks to all my friends, many of which I have had since being at school.**

No friend meant more to me than my wonderful husband, John.

John was diagnosed with MS in the 1960s, after losing the feeling in his hands when we came back from holiday.

Before we knew what was happening, it was just funny. He'd drop a tray with afternoon tea things. Or he'd slip and we didn't take any notice of it. We thought he was just clumsy.

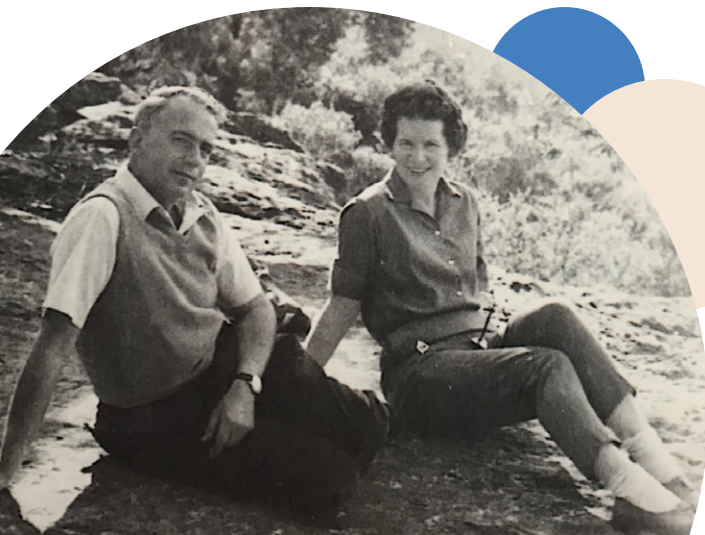


Photo: John and Marjorie



When John was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, I didn't know what it was. I had heard of cancer, Parkinson's, TB. But not MS. Only by having to cope with John's diagnosis did I learn more about it.

I lost John to MS in 1972. But over time since then, research has allowed people with multiple sclerosis to live longer, better lives. Maybe if he had been diagnosed today, we could have had longer together.

I decided to leave a gift in my Will to MS Plus because I thoroughly approve of the work they are doing and the help they are giving.

John had my love and support throughout his life with MS. Your gift would mean that many others would have a friend throughout theirs as well.

- Marjorie Jones, widow of John Jones





These stories are of incredible people dedicated to fast-tracking a cure for multiple sclerosis and providing care until we're there. Will you add your story by leaving a gift in your Will?

Our friendly Gift in Wills team is here to answer any questions or concerns you may have. **Please don't hesitate to get in touch with Laura Henschke.**

Call: 1800 443 867

Email: futureplanning@msplus.org.au

Visit: www.mymslegacy.org.au

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